

□

This Week in Congress

August 9, 2010

Dear Friend,

Welcome to “This Week in Congress.” Speaker Pelosi has called the House of Representatives back into session to vote on another \$26 billion domestic spending package on Tuesday. This week’s headlines are:

- [Taxpayer Dollars Being Spent Unwisely on Stimulus Projects](#)
- [Conservation Reserve Program General Sign-Up Taking Place Now](#)
- [New Social Security Hearing Office Opens in Topeka](#)
- [Supporting Community Schools in Kansas](#)
- [In the Office](#)

Taxpayer Dollars Being Spent Unwisely on Stimulus Projects

This week, Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK) and Senator John McCain (R-AZ) released an oversight report to highlight questionable stimulus projects that are wasteful, mismanaged and have been unsuccessful in creating jobs. The report was the third in a series of reports to highlight government spending that has failed to sustain economic growth. Examples of wasteful spending include: \$1.9 million for international ant research, \$363,760 to help the National Institute of Health promote the positive impacts of the stimulus projects and \$62 million for a tunnel to nowhere in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania that even Governor Ed Rendell called “a tragic mistake.”

Since the \$862 billion dollar stimulus package passed eighteen months ago, millions of jobs have been lost and the unemployment rate has continued to rise. Americans are struggling and Washington's solution of spending billions of dollars on stimulus programs has failed miserably. I opposed this wasteful spending and will continue to oppose reckless government spending. History shows that sustainable economic growth starts with the private sector. Now is the time for Congress to pass legislation that creates an environment where small businesses can grow and create jobs. [Click here](#) to learn about legislation I have introduced that would promote small business growth.

[Share on Facebook](#) • [Tweet this](#) • [Email this](#)

Conservation Reserve Program General Sign-Up Taking Place Now

A general sign-up period is currently being held for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) through August 27, 2010. During the August sign-up period, land owners have the opportunity to offer land not currently enrolled in CRP and re-enroll CRP contracts set to expire on September 30, 2010. During House Agriculture Committee hearings over the past few months, I pressed USDA officials to announce a general sign-up period because a substantial amount of CRP acres are set to expire on September 30, 2010, and farmers in certain regions of Kansas became eligible to destroy grass cover on expiring acres beginning on July 1, 2010. Notice of the CRP general sign-up came last week. While it would have been more helpful a month ago, I am glad that Kansas farmers can now make important management decisions about their CRP acres. For more information about CRP and other FSA programs, please visit your county FSA office or www.fsa.usda.gov.

[Share on Facebook](#) • [Tweet this](#) • [Email this](#)

New Social Security Hearing Office Opens in Topeka

In 2007, the American Association of People with Disabilities released a report showing that Kansas had the greatest backlog of citizens waiting to receive a decision from the Social Security Administration (SSA) on the status of their disability benefits. At the time the report was released, Kansans filing for an appeal with the Kansas City SSA office had to wait an average

of 628 days for a hearing. Such long wait times are unacceptable. Shortly after learning about this backlog in 2007, I met with SSA Commissioner Michael Astrue to encourage him to reduce wait times for Kansans. Since then, the SSA has brought two additional judges to our state to hear cases and has made use of video conference technology to allow judges in other states to hear the cases of Kansans.

On Tuesday, the SSA took another important step to further alleviating the backlog by opening a new hearing office in Topeka. Five judges will hear cases in this office, further reducing the backlog and providing Kansans with more timely decisions on their disability claims. The opening of the office in Topeka also creates more than two dozen new jobs for the community. I am pleased that the SSA continues to make progress in reducing wait times.

[Share on Facebook](#) • [Tweet this](#) • [Email this](#)

Supporting Community Schools in Kansas

This weekend, I joined local residents at the 64th annual Tipton picnic and auction, sponsored by St. Boniface parish and the Tipton community. This community event brings together residents to raise funds for Tipton Catholic High School. On Saturday evening, I enjoyed eating dinner with members of the community and discussing ongoing efforts to maintain their community's schools. Congratulations to all the Tipton alumni, especially those from the class of 1925, who joined together on Friday evening to support their alma mater. Thanks to all the

volunteers who worked hard to put together this year's picnic.

[Share on Facebook](#) • [Tweet this](#) • [Email this](#)

In the Office

Several Kansans were in this week for a tour of the U.S. Capitol building, including Mark, Jennifer, Jacob and Rob Nagely of Sabetha; Greg, Pam, Nathan and Katie Willis of Hoisington; Jack and Roxie Janssen of Geneseo; Judy Frieze of Chapman; Mickey, Marcy, Katie, Maddy and Michaela Gruber of Powhattan; Tom, Melinda, Carson and Harrison Jett of Salina; DeAnne Davison and Candee VonLehe of Ness City; Brad, Betsy and Sarah Smoot of Topeka; Gabriel Al-Salem and Viktoria and Anna Olskaia of Lindsborg; Kevin Hamm of Pratt; Portia Read of Richmond; Elva Higgins of St. Mary's; Trent and Christy Jacks of Haviland; Jamey, Angie, Joseph, Jacob and Addie Roth of Victoria; Francis, Lori, Lindsey and Cori Drouhard of Danville; and Gary and Marilyn Hoppe of Wichita.

[Share on Facebook](#) • [Tweet this](#) • [Email this](#)

Contact Me

It is an honor to serve you in Washington, D.C. Please let me know how I can be of assistance. To send me an email, [click here](#) . You can also [click here](#) to contact me through one of my Kansas offices or my Washington, D.C., office.

Very truly yours,

Jerry

